

# The Soldier Dreams

written by Daniel MacIvor



# NEVER SWIM ALONE

Written by Daniel MacIvor





presents

**THE SOLDIER DREAMS  
&  
NEVER SWIM ALONE**

**Written by Daniel MacIvor  
Directed by Amanda Weier**

Featuring:

Bryan Bertone • Emma Bruno • Stephanie Crothers • Carmella Jenkins  
Conor Lane • Dylan Maddalena • Schuyler Mastain\* • Amy Moorman\* • Ethan Niven  
Stevie-Jean Placek • Scott Roberts\* • David Shofner • Casey Sullivan

Scenic Design  
**Jan Munroe**

Lighting Design  
**Matt Richter**

Sound Design  
**Mia Glenn-Schuster**

Costume Design  
**Mylette Nora**

Properties  
**Bruce Dickinson**

Asst. Lighting Design  
**Hayden Kirschbaum**

Publicist  
**Lucy Pollak**

Production Stage Manager  
**Jennifer Palumbo\***

Fight Choreography  
**Emma Bruno**

**Original Composition by Stephen Ridley**

**Produced by Martha Demson, Carmella Jenkins & David Shofner**



This production is made possible in part by a grant from the California Arts Council



This presentation is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the LA County Dept of Arts & Culture



### **Mission**

Open Fist Theatre Company is a self-governing community of theatre artists who believe in the transformative imperative of inclusive and collaborative theatre. Dedicated to expanding social awareness through art, we seek, through diverse voices and artistic visions, to celebrate difference, nurture empathy and advance social change.

### **Board of Directors**

Martha Demson, Richard Michael Knolla, Christopher Lore, Schuyler Mastain, Charles Otte, Malhar Pagay, Katie May Porter, Catie Saralegui, Ina Shumaker

### **Company Staff**

Artistic Director..... **Martha Demson**  
Associate Artistic Director / Co Production Manager..... **Amanda Weier**  
Managing Director..... **Katie May Porter**  
Co Production Manager / Facilities Manager ..... **Art Hall**  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Associate ..... **Carmella Jenkins**  
Literary Manager..... **Barbara Schofield**  
Marketing & Social Media Manager ..... **Debba Rofheart**  
Membership Manager..... **Beth Robbins**  
Financial Director ..... **Richard Michael Knolla**  
Education Director ..... **Laura Richardson**  
Outreach Director ..... **Dionna Veremis**

### **Our Members**

Hetty Abbott, Lane Allison, Christine Avila, Bryan Bertone, Phillip William Brock, Sandra Kate Burck, Spencer Cantrell, Christopher Cappiello, Stephanie Crothers, Martha Demson, Bruce Dickinson, Presciana Esparolini, Lori Gambero, David Girona Jr., Art Hall, Laura James, Carmella Jenkins, Caroline Klidonas, Richard Michael Knolla, Tim Labor, Elizabeth Lande, Sherry Larson, Dylan Maddalena, Derek Manson, Ben Martin, Schuyler Mastain, Angel Miguel, Jan Munroe, Jennifer Palumbo, Rod Menzies, Amy Moorman, Scott Mosenson, Ethan Niven, Tom Noga, Jason Paige, Stevie-Jean Placek, Katie May Porter, Tina Preston, Laura Richardson, Beth Robbins, Scott Roberts, Debba Rofheart, Jade Santana, Judith Scarpone, Barbara Schofield, David Shofner, Ina Shumaker, Casey Sullivan, Janine Venable, Dionna Veremis, Amanda Weier, Alexander Wells, Ann Marie Wilding, Jennifer Zorbalas

#### **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**



@openfist

# THE SOLDIER DREAMS

## Cast of Characters

David(1) .....	Ethan Niven
David .....	David Shofner
Tish .....	Amy Moorman *
Sam .....	Scott Roberts * Casey Sullivan
Judy .....	Stephanie Crothers Stevie-Jean Placek
Richard .....	Conor Lane
Student .....	Schuyler Mastain * understudy Ethan Niven
Nurse .....	Carmella Jenkins

**THE SOLDIER DREAMS** is a naturalistic dream play about the journey of a virus, its beginning in a love affair and its end in a family.

-- Daniel MacIvor, BWW interview Oct 11, 2021

**The Soldier Dreams** was first produced in 1997 by da da kamera at Canadian Stage, Toronto

**The Soldier Dreams** is staged by arrangement with Pam Winter, GGA, [www.ggagency.ca](http://www.ggagency.ca)



Member, Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. This production is presented under the auspices of the Actors' Equity Los Angeles Membership Company Rule.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We chose to include **The Soldier Dreams** in our Winter 2020 season back in November of 2019. We felt it important to acknowledge and mark 40 years of dealing with the devastation of the AIDS epidemic, hoping the production might serve as a reminder and remembrance of all the gorgeous souls lost to (and still battling) that insidious disease. There were plans for talk-backs with leaders in the LGBTQIA+ community, with folx who'd been on the front lines of the battle in the 80s and 90s (this play was written and is set in 1997; I was in Chicago at the time, going to exactly the kind of dance clubs David and Judy both loved, and seeing for myself the toll AIDS was taking on my friends, especially those within our tight-knit theatre community.) We finalized casting on March 11th, 2020; two days later we'd press "pause" on the Rorschach Fest we had running at AVT, thinking we'd be on-hold for maybe a couple weeks, maybe a month. Early on the cast met regularly via Zoom as this other awful virus took hold around the world. When it was clear this wasn't going to be a production pause of just a few months, I told the cast we'd regroup in the Summer (of 2020)... then we spoke of regrouping in the late Fall... Okay, early 2021 — surely by then we'd have a hold on this thing. I don't need to tell anyone how that worked out.

Finally in July we regrouped on Zoom to check in, to see if there was still interest in telling this story. I will admit here that I wondered more than a few times if we'd missed our moment, if audiences would think it possibly in poor taste to move ahead with a play that explores a family as they are forced to say goodbye to a loved one due to an unfair virus. Two of our original cast members had relocated during the pandemic, but the rest of the ensemble remained intact and game to bring the play to life. We met for our first in-person read-thru in the courtyard of AVT one evening in late August, all vaxxed and still masked. After the read, we talked and came to the conclusion that not only did the play still work its gentle magic of celebrating life as it dealt with the confusion and awfulness of death, it might in fact be something of a balm for our times as it doesn't shy away from all that sucks about loss, but at the same time it reminds us that there is a kind of immortality made possible when we take time to connect and remember (and "dance and get remarkably drunk and fight...") It is so very human to fear death and the unknowns about whatever might come next. What I love about this play is it allows for the possibility (probability?) that the beat goes on, somewhere, somehow. This isn't a religious thing, but an energy thing. There is an energy to love and to loss and to wanting to find answers (to asking "Why?") — it's all part of the beautiful dance of life and I'm so glad you allowed us to cut in to share this one with you.

-- Amanda Weier, October 2021

# NEVER SWIM ALONE

## Cast of Characters

Frank ..... Bryan Bertone  
Bill ..... Dylan Maddalena  
Ref ..... Emma Bruno

“Why **NEVER SWIM ALONE?**” I simply love this play. I first saw it in Chicago in the late 90s. It was an off-night offering and I can’t recall for certain the venue — I think it was one of Steppenwolf’s auxiliary spaces... It could have been Victory Gardens. What I know for certain is I and about 20 other patrons who’d never heard of the writer, but wanted to support the director, climbed some narrow stairs and entered an intimate black-box space where we subsequently had our minds blown by this gem that is at once experimental, but also completely accessible. It was a limited run because the actors involved were a big-deal and all the theaters in town wanted to work with them. The show ended up getting extended around the actors’ schedules — meaning sometimes the play would run at 11 pm on a random Wednesday. And I’d go. I ended up seeing it 4 times. That’s how I came to fall in love with Daniel MacIvor. This is my second time directing the piece. When I first joined the Fist in 2004 I pitched it for a Directors Fest and it made me look so super-smart that I was named Literary Manager.

The piece continues to make me laugh and think and feel things. I hope it does the same for you. I hope you find it timeless and relevant, funny and sad, poetic and soulful, deep and delightful. Whatever your perception of the play, you’re 100% right.

-- Amanda Weier, Rorschach Fest program  
March, 2020

**Never Swim Alone** was first produced in 1991 by da da kamera at Platform 9 Theatre in The Theatre Centre in Toronto

**Never Swim Alone** is staged by arrangement with Pam Winter, GGA, [www.ggagency.ca](http://www.ggagency.ca)

## The Casts



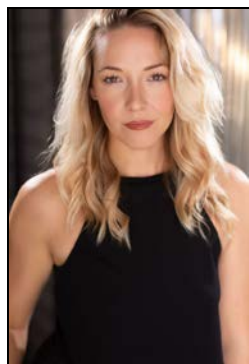
**Brian Bertone** (Frank) Is grateful for the opportunity to be back in the theatre, and for nearly a decade performing with Open Fist. Previous Fist credits include: *EARLY*

*AND OFTEN, SHORT ENDS, FOOTE NOTES, WELCOME TO YOUR ALTERNATIVE REALITY, UNDER MILKWOOD, ALL NIGHT LONG* (as Polar Bear, his most poignant work yet), *LAST CALL*, and *GHOSTS*. Other favorites include -- Los Angeles: *CLOSER, ROSENCRANTZ AND GULDENSTERN ARE DEAD, A FLEA IN HER EAR, IT'S A LIVING, THE FIRE ROOM, THE FOUR OF US, LIGHT UP THE SKY*. San Diego: *HISTORY BOYS, THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED*. Orange County: *THE LION IN WINTER*



**Emma Bruno** (Ref / Fight Choreography) is an LA based actor who's had quite the busy year. She's been so grateful to have the amazing opportunity to originate the role of "God" in the new play *SCOTCH SUNDAYS*, star

in two independent films within the last year, and pop up on the Snapchat discover page in her commercial! She is thrilled to be a part of *NEVER SWIM ALONG*. In its original run, she had the pleasure of being the show's fight choreographer and could not be more excited to play the role of "Ref" in this run.



**Stephanie Crothers** (Judy) is very excited and grateful to be back on stage with her fellow company members at the Open Fist to showcase Daniel Maclvor's resonant story about love, death and a family's frayed connection. After finishing her theater studies at USC, Stephanie has appeared in multiple productions with

the Open Fist, an array of short films, as well as commercials for brands like Toyota and AT&T. When not acting, you can find her slinging homes by the beach in the South Bay or painting in her art studio with her dog, Polly Jean.



**Carmella Jenkins** (Nurse / Producer) is extremely happy to find an acting home at Open Fist Theatre Company. She has a B.F.A. in Theatre Performance from Chapman University and has been in many short film and online media productions. She is looking forward to sharing and bringing to life more stories on stage. She's been an Open Fist

member since November 2019. She has recently been seen in *RORSCHACH FEST* (Churchill's *THIS IS A CHAIR* and *HERE WE GO*) and in *BOTH: A HARD DAY'S SILENT NIGHT*.



**Conor Lane** (Richard) Thrilled to be back at The Fist! Previous collaborations include the world premieres of *THE IDIOT BOX* and *deLEARious* as well as the award-winning revival of *TRAVESTIES*. Recent theatrical excursions include *EINSTEIN IS A DUMMY* (Sierra Madre Playhouse) and *THE HOMOSEXUALS* (Celebration Theatre) Previous commercial

campaigns include AT&T, Aquafina, Western Union, and Simple Mobile. BA Marquette University/MA London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Thank you so much my darling Amanda Weier.



**Dylan Maddalena** (Bill) is thrilled to be back with this cast & crew to finish our run of *NEVER SWIM ALONE* & ecstatic to have an audience again! Dylan is a longtime member of the Open Fist Theatre Co and holds a BFA in Acting from the University of

Southern California. More info:

[www.dylanmaddalena.com](http://www.dylanmaddalena.com). Socials: @DylanMadd



**Schuyler Mastain** (Student) After getting his Masters in Acting at UNC Chapel Hill, where he worked on over a dozen mainstage productions with the PlayMakers Repertory Company, Schuyler moved back to the land of his birth and set up shop. His play, *THE SOWER*, about the life of Vincent van Gogh, premiered at the Stephanie Feury Studio

Theatre and received an Encore Producer's Award as part of the 2019 Hollywood Fringe. His most recent play, *HANDSOME MAN*, was part of Open Fist Theatre Company's recent First Look Festival and played at the Flight Theatre for this year's Hollywood Fringe. A member of Open Fist since 2020, Schuyler is currently teaching High School English in downtown LA.



**Amy Moorman** (Tish) Theatre credits include: *BOTH* (OFTC), *CAT'S CRADLE* (Sierra Madre Playhouse), *BEDROOM FARCE* (Odyssey Theatre),

*COMRADES* (LA August Strindberg Society), *THE WOLF* (Artworks Theatre), *HELLO FROM BERTHA* (Actor's Art Theatre), *MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT* (Odyssey Theatre), *CRIMES OF THE HEART* (Long Beach Studio Theatre), *NORTH OF PROVIDENCE* (Bleecker Street Theatre, NYC). Amy worked with the late Robert Altman on one of his last projects, *THE*

*UNDRESSING ROOM*. Other film & television credits include: *VICE* (with Christian Bale), *AMERICAN CRIME STORY: THE PEOPLE vs O.J. SIMPSON*, *GANG-RELATED* (with Dennis Quaid), *MOUSY BROWN*. She received her MFA in Acting from New School University, and is a Lifetime Member of the Actors Studio. (AEA/SAG/AFTRA)



**Ethan Niven** (David (I), Student und.) is thrilled and honored to be debuting in his first Open Fist Theatre Company production, *THE SOLDIER DREAMS*. Originally from South Lake Tahoe, CA, Ethan recently relocated to Los Angeles. A graduate of Southern Oregon University, with a BA in Performance and a double minor in Musical

Theatre and Stage Management, Ethan is proud to be part of this incredible production.



**Stevie-Jean Placek** (Judy) is delighted to be making her debut with Open Fist Theatre Company! She has a degree in Acting from The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Since graduating, she's enjoyed the magic of filming features and shorts. Now she is very excited to be back on the stage to help tell this delicate and beautiful story

celebrating life and death. Stevie-Jean is seeking theatrical representation and is currently SAG eligible. To find out updates on her career, check out her website [steviejeanplacek.com](http://steviejeanplacek.com) or Instagram to see her surpassing Betty Crocker in the kitchen @steviejeanplacek. Thank you to my mom, dad, grandparents and friends for your support and love.





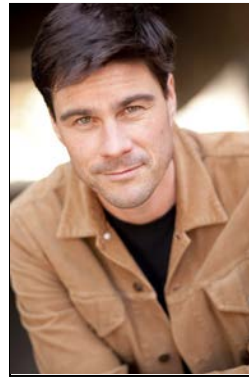
**Scott Roberts** (Sam) was recently seen in the Open Fist Theatre's production of *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*. Other theatrical credits include: *A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN* (Rubicon Theater), *CREATION* (Boston Court), *CYRANO* (The Fountain Theatre), *THE RAINMAKER* (A Noise Within), *MY ANTONIA* (Rubicon

Theatre, PRTE), and *HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES* (Odyssey Theater). Off-Broadway: *HURLYBURLY* (Maddox Theatre), *BEYOND THERAPY* (Bank St. Theater), O'Neill's *NOW YOU ASK ME* (Provincetown Playhouse) and *PRIDE'S CROSSING* (Bleecker St. Theater). Scott has his MFA from the Actors Studio Drama School and his BA from Harvard College. He is a proud member of The Actors Studio and the Open Fist Theatre.



**David Shofner** (David / Producer) is a proud Open Fist Theatre company member. He most recently performed with the company in the Caryl Churchill

one-acts, *THIS IS A CHAIR* and *HERE WE GO*. David has also performed with Open Fist in Brian Friel's *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*, *WHAT MATTERS NOW ?!* and *BOTH*. Other selected theatre: *GIVE ME THE SUN* (Tony Tanner's adaptation of Ibsen's *GHOSTS* @ the Lounge Theatre), David Koresh in *INSIDE PRIVATE LIVES* (Lex & Fremont Centre Theatres; Edinburgh Fringe), *CORPUS CHRISTI* (Zephyr Theatre), *THE CLAIRVOYANT* (Playwrights' Arena). Recent films: *HINDSIGHT*, *REDEMPTION TRAIL*, *GAP WEEKEND*. Love to Mark, the best of husbands.



**Casey Sullivan** (Sam) Theater credits include the role of Gary in *DADDYO DIES WELL* written and directed by Murray Mednick. Variety said "Sullivan, a winning performer even at Gary's lowest ebb, believably charts a progression from panicky dry heaves to wonder as the Quechua brew brings this modern Everyman face to face with 'reality'." Additional

credits include: *OCCUPIED* at the Beverly Hills Playhouse, directed by Tony Abatemarco, *HEDDA GABLER* for Little Fish Theatre in Long Beach, directed by Melanie Jones, and *BUG* for the Veterans Arts Alliance, directed by Keith Jeffreys. Sullivan has recently filmed two independent features, one premiering at Motion Pictures Samuel Goldwyn Theatre, *THE DEATH OF COLM CANTER*, in the role of Colm Canter, and *WIDOWS* premiering at Charlie Chaplin Screening Room at Raleigh Studios. Recent commercial credits include spokesperson for Viasat, other spots for Volkswagen and Chevrolet.

## The Creatives

### **Daniel MacIvor** (Playwright)

Daniel is originally from Cape Breton and currently divides his time between Toronto and Halifax. Daniel has written numerous award-winning theatre productions and his work has been translated into French, Portuguese, Spanish, Czech, German and Japanese. Daniel received the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama for his collection of plays *I STILL LOVE YOU* and is a recipient of the Siminovitch Prize for Theatre. He is also the recipient of an Obie Award and a GLAAD Award for *IN ON IT*, as well as a Canadian Screen Award for his feature film script *WEIRDOS*. Daniel collaborated with Rufus Wainwright on the opera *HADRIAN* which premiered at the Canadian Opera Company to critical acclaim. His most recent ensemble piece, *NEW MAGIC VALLEY FUN TOWN* premiered in 2019 and went on to have a nationwide tour. His newest work, a new musical he's written in collaboration with Steven Page, will premiere at The Stratford Festival. He serves as Artistic Director of reWork, a Toronto-based touring theatre company he runs with Marcie Januska.

### **Amanda Weier** (Director/Associate Artistic Director)

A long-time OFTC member, Amanda studied Theatre & Creative Writing at Northwestern and holds a Certificate in Directing from the Royal Court. Favorite credits include *SECOND CITY THIS WEEK*, *STAGE DOOR* (LA Weekly "Best Actress" nominee), *ROOM SERVICE* (LA Weekly "Best Actress: nominee), *A WOLF INSIDE THE FENCE*, *THE NORMAL CHILD* ("Best of Fringe"), *A LIFE OF EASE* (director), *BLUE NIGHT IN THE HEART OF WEST* (director) and *THE :NV:S:BLE PLAY* (director.) When not frolicking in black box spaces, Amanda shells houses and gets to work with the awesome faculty and students at AMDA. She's so grateful for your support of this production.

### **Jan Munroe** (Scenic Design)

Jan Munroe has been involved with Open Fist Theatre for the last decade as an actor, set designer and builder.

### **Matt Richter** (Lighting Design)

Matt Richter is an award-winning designer based in Los Angeles. He is the resident designer for the LA LGBT Center where he also works full time. Designs

for the Center include *SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE; REVISITED* (Ovation nomination), and *HIT THE WALL* (Ovation Nomination, LADCC Award). Previous designs include *MR. BURNS* (Ovation Nomination) and *A GULAG MOUSE* (Ovation nomination) both for Sacred Fools; *ANNA IN THE TROPICS*, *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*, and *NEIL SIMON'S MUSICAL FOOLS* (Open Fist); *4:48 PSYCHOSIS* (Son of Semele), the Los Angeles premiere of *BETWEEN RIVERSIDE AND CRAZY* (The Fountain), *DISPOSABLE NECESSITIES AND EARTHQUAKES IN LONDON* (Rogue Machine) and *I'M NOT A COMEDIAN, I'M LENNY BRUCE* Off Broadway and in Chicago. Matt also serves as half of the experimental ambient folk duo Lanfair Field ([lanfairfield.com](http://lanfairfield.com)) and creates his own audio strangeness as autodealer ([autodlr.net](http://autodlr.net)). For more information please visit [Matrichter.net](http://Matrichter.net).

### **Mia Glenn-Schuster** (Sound Design)

Mia is a sound designer from San Francisco who works in theater and video games. Previous credits include mixing *FOR THE LOVE OF A GLOVE*, sound designing *ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM ROBOTS* for the Alexa, and editing dialogue for *THE SIMS 4*. While pursuing their BFA in Sound Design from USC, Mia was a founding member of Dorothy's Friends Theater Company (dftc), a company dedicated to showcasing positive queer stories on stage. In between shows, Mia can be roaming the streets of Los Angeles on their roller skates or working in their vegetable garden. Mia's work can be found at [mglennsound.com](http://mglennsound.com).

### **Mylette Nora** (Costume Design)

Mylette Nora is a recipient of the NAACP Theatre Award for best costumes, is listed in the honors edition of The Cambridge Registry of Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women, and works world wide on television, film, and stage. She was seen nightly on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and now weekly on "Jay Leno's Garage". The famed artist Synthia St. James noted Mylette as being the inspiration for her world renowned painting "Ensemble" which graced the cover of the best selling novel "Waiting To Exhale" by Terry McMillan. Mylette designs doggie wear, [FromTheHeartDoggieWear.com](http://FromTheHeartDoggieWear.com) as well as heirloom dolls, "My Mind's Eye."

**Bruce Dickinson** (Props Design)

Bruce began designing props and set pieces for the Open Fist Theatre Company over 15 years ago. Specializing in creating realistic fake foods and period set dressings, some favorite past shows include: James Joyce's *The Dead*, *Travesties*, *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Under Milk Wood*.

**Jennifer Palumbo** (Stage Manager)

Jennifer is absolutely delighted to be back at Open Fist following the abrupt shutdown of 2020, and grateful to be part of this project with these amazing designers, artists, and storytellers! OFTC credits; *RORSCHACH FEST*, *NEIL SIMON'S MUSICAL FOOLS*, *DANCING AT LUGHNASA*, *LAST CALL*, *ALL NIGHT LONG*, *UNDER MILK WOOD*, *DeLEARious*, *THE GARY PLAYS*, and *MAD FOREST*. Career highlights: *THE COLOR PURPLE* with Greenway Arts Alliance; Katori Hall's *THE MOUNTAIN TOP* at The Matrix, and at MLK50 in Memphis, TN, with Hattiloo Theatre; *SUPPLIANT WOMEN* at the Getty Villa with Rogue Machine Theatre.

**Emma Bruno** (Fight Choreographer)

See Cast Bios

**Stephen Ridley** (Composer)

Stephen Ridley is a composer and orchestrator based in Los Angeles. His music features niche percussion instruments and electronics, blended with the traditional orchestra. Stephen did his graduate work at UCLA, where he was a student of Jerry Goldsmith. Shortly after grad school, Stephen was selected to underscore Disney/ABC's Academy Awards Promo campaign, a project which was helmed by director John Singleton. Since then, he's built a career writing string and percussion scores for indie feature films, shorts and television, including projects for HBO, MGM, and Fox Singapore. Stephen is also active in the world of concert and academic music. His works for percussion are published by C. Alan, Mile9 Music and Keyboard Percussion Publications.

**Martha Demson** (Producer/Artistic Director)

Highlights of Demson's award-winning career with the Open Fist Theatre include: As a producer: *Neil Simon's Musical Fools* (Simon, Swann, West); *Anna in the Tropics* (Cruz); *All Night Long* (O'Keefe); *Under Milk Wood* (Thomas); *The Gary Plays* (Mednick); *The Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Woman He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union* (Greig) LA Weekly Production of the Year; *How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients* (Visniec) also in New York and Edinburgh. As a director: The Ovation Award-winning *PAPA* (deGroot) also in San Francisco and Istanbul; *Casanova* (Congden), *Abingdon Square* (Fornes), *Escape from Happiness* (Walker), *The Existents* (Taylor); *Dear John Mayer* (Shoshana Bean / Eydie Faye); *BOTH: A Hard Day's Silent Night*. Education: Yale University and Sanford Meisner's 2-year master class.